



United States Department of Agriculture

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of the Assistant
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Office of Homeland
Security

Personnel and
Document Security
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PDSB Bulletin #20-04

Subject: Option to Defer Fingerprints during COVID-19 Response

Issue: Temporary measures to address the challenges in obtaining fingerprints for background investigation submissions during the COVID-19 response.

Date Issued: April 1, 2020

Effective Date: April 1, 2020

Scope and Effect: This is an internal advisory document for use by USDA agencies and offices involved in personnel security services.

Supersession: None

Procedure: On March 25, 2020, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a memorandum titled "[Temporary Procedures for Personnel Vetting and Appointment of New Employees During Maximum Telework Period Due to Coronavirus COVID-19](#)" in response to the challenges in obtaining fingerprints as many Federal, state, and local offices that take fingerprints are temporarily closed during the COVID-19 response.

On March 30, 2020, the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) issued Federal Investigations Notice (FIN) 20-03, "[Temporary Deferral of Fingerprinting due to COVID-19 Impacts](#)" to provide guidance on how to submit investigative requests to DCSA without an associated fingerprint submission. That new process is now available.

We will opt to use this alternative process when the collection of fingerprints is not possible due to the impact of COVID-19, using the guidance outlined in FIN 20-03 with the following additional requirements:

1. Agency POCs will maintain a tracking spreadsheet for all individuals whom they have submitted an investigation request for without an associated fingerprint.
2. Upon the announcement from the Department that maximum telework has ended, Agency POCs will notify those individuals who had investigations submitted without fingerprints that they have 30 calendar days to complete and submit the required fingerprint charts. An additional 30 calendar day extension can be granted by the

Agency POCs if an individual is in a location where fingerprinting services remain temporarily unavailable or delayed. All extensions must be tracked so timely follow-ups are maintained.

3. All adjudications of closed investigations, that were submitted without the fingerprints, will not have final determinations made until the fingerprints have been submitted and the appropriate Fingerprint Special Agreement Check (SAC) result has been adjudicated.
4. It is required that all persons privileged to be employed in the departments and agencies of the United States Government shall be reliable, trustworthy, of good conduct and character, and of complete and unswerving loyalty to the United States. Regulations require a background investigation to be conducted on each federal employee and contractor. If an individual fails to comply with the requirement to submit fingerprints, we will be unable to make a final determination on their suitability or eligibility to hold a national security position because DCSA will consider the investigation incomplete.

NOTE: The above (up to) 60-day timeframe for submitting fingerprints is interim guidance. Once the maximized telework response to COVID-19 is over, the Executive Agents will issue a subsequent memo setting a deadline for when pending fingerprints need to be submitted by.

This guidance will continue to be assessed as the COVID-19 situation evolves and additional information becomes available.

Inquiries:

If additional instruction is needed to navigate this process in e-QIP, a job aid titled “FIPC Code C9 Job Aid” has been developed and posted to the NP2 public library in the folder e-QIP Documentation/Job Aids.

For further questions on this bulletin, contact the PerSec Chief, Dianica Knox at Dianica.knox@usda.gov or the PerSec inbox at PerSec@usda.gov.